

outputs and ultimate outcomes consistent with the Governor's Result-based Budgeting Initiative and relevant to departmental operations.

Previously, professional development provided by DPI had taken a duplicative, shotgun approach with each division and office scheduling and conducting its own training and conferences. Although there is not yet a cohesive, comprehensive approach to consolidate and channel the best resources toward each office's strengths, several efforts are currently geared toward that end. DPI senior managers are commended for recognizing the need to better plan and coordinate professional development efforts and focus them on State Board goals.

Substantive impediments in meeting both DPI and LEA needs exist within the state statutory and regulatory systems and requirements. These impediments are costly to DPI and likely other agencies in terms of time, energy, and money. DPI testimony revealed that State ITS Office requirements may need to be streamlined to balance the need for accountability with each agency's ability to operate efficiently and effectively.

Evergreen finds that the North Carolina's internal testing program and timeliness of providing results to LEAs and state audiences are both cost effective and efficient. Within the next year and a half, the transfer of accountability data systems to ITS will potentially become very costly to the State as well as even more time-consuming for DPI staff, making them less responsive to school districts. Additionally, current ITS constraints place the state in an untenable position with respect to meeting federal reporting requirements in a timely manner.

Cost overruns and delays in the implementation of the North Carolina Window of Information on Student Education (WISE) have been extensive. Recently, the Associate Superintendent for Technology Services has implemented multiple, effective management strategies, and caused a reduction in cost overruns relating to NC WISE.

With the severity of the effect of slow processing of educator licenses on the ability of local school districts to maintain a corps of highly-qualified teachers as well as the lengthy time it takes to navigate technology purchases through ITS, the State should move immediately to enter the process of automating licensure applications.

The internal auditing function in the Department of Public Instruction is not in compliance with the requirements of the 2007 State Internal Audit Act. DPI should review the requirements of the 2007 State Internal Audit Act and ensure compliance with the standards set forth in the law. DPI should establish roles and responsibilities for employees, develop and approve an internal auditing charter, document procedures and work flow, and evaluate internal controls once the system is established.

The Evergreen Team was asked to look at best practices in state departments of education. This comparison study of North Carolina and five benchmark states has revealed some cutting-edge practices that have the potential to advance state educational systems, public accountability, and student achievement. **Chapter 2** provides an overview of several important categories of state policies and practices that may be informative to North Carolina policymakers and practitioners.

